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Springfield, Illinois — Legislation supported by State Senator Tony Munoz (D-Chicago) ~~was signed into law by Governor Quinn which allows undocumented citizens to take part~~ in Illinois' college savings programs.

"These children were brought to the United States, and now as young adults, I believe they should have the opportunity to go to college. They should be able to participate in the college savings programs the state offers," Senator Munoz said. "Currently, there are nearly 95,000 young people who will benefit from this new law."

Senate Bill 2185 will allow Illinois residents with a valid taxpayer identification number to invest in Illinois' college savings programs; Bright Start, Bright Direction, or the College Illinois Program.

In addition, this measure will create the Illinois DREAM Commission, which will provide scholarships to the children of immigrants and will provide other educational assistance to them. These scholarships and programs will be funded by private funds not state funds. Lastly, it would expand the continuing professional development requirements for school counselors to include activities that address the needs of children of immigrants.

The Illinois DREAM Commission will establish a not-for-profit entity which is responsible for raising funds for the administration of the Commission, its programs, and scholarships. It will also select recipients to receive the scholarships.

"In 2003 I sponsored House Bill 60, now law, which allows for undocumented residents to receive in-state tuition rates as long as they meet certain requirements," stated Senator Munoz. "Illinois is one of eleven states that currently provides in-state tuition rates to undocumented residents of the state."